READERS' EXCHANGE

I was an elder in a Church of Christ in Texas for 16 years, but when the other elders asked me not to teach so much on the grace of God, I began to have second thoughts for the direction of my life and now consider myself an undenominational Christian. We moved here last summer and now worship with the independent Christian Church. —*Hugh Thomas, Prescott, Az.*

Your article "The Doe of the Dawn" was one of the best gospel proclamations that I have experienced. I am glad to see someone address himself to the *basics* of conversion and of God's just part in it. God has taken salvation out of the realm of luck and given it to the seeker after truth. Otherwise let us accept predestination and all its implications and be done with the controversy. You unveiled what is meant by Heb. 11:6: "He that comes to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him." —*J. E. Jones, Jr., San Antonio, Tx.*

I was very interested in your article on "Principles of Marriage and Divorce." It is not that I agree with all your conclusions (I question whether divorce can be a solution for sexual incompatibility or unfaithfulness), but your assertion that Mark and Luke rather than Matthew record the original position of Jesus on the matter strikes me as ever more bold than your usual stance among Church of Christ editors. Modern critical scholars, such as Joachin Jeremias, compel me to agree that the exception for adultery is a later, if still early, development. I have found however that my associates, trained in our own orthodox Bible colleges, know virtually nothing about modern biblical scholarship, with the result that any comments I have on the matter are rejected out of hand. —*Neil Worley, Hampshire, Tn.*

(There is nothing in the Scriptures to suggest that they are not to be studied critically. We even have it in the NT itself, for Peter recognizes that Paul wrote things that are "hard to understand." It is noteworthy that Peter did not blame the obscurity on the Holy Spirit, who supposedly dictated it to Paul, according to one theory. —*Ed.*)

I can see much more openness in several of the Church of Christ congregations in this area and its really refreshing to see elders who are willing to listen to new ideas and fellowship with "denominational people." —*Tom Johnson, Austin, Tx.*

We had to cancel our trip to Israel, set for last November. David Reagan of Lamb and Lion Ministry has reset the trip for May 16-27, with Cairo and London included this time. The price is 1970.00 from Dallas, 1825.00 from New York. If you are interested, write us at once and we will send you the descriptive brochure.

If you do not yet have your copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches*, we will send you one for 21.95 postpaid. From the responses we are getting, we should be able to sell this book on a money-back guarantee. At last history is made interesting! And our offer is still good on getting one free. Send us 8 new subscribers at 3.00 each for a total of 24.00 and you will get the book free.

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RESTORATION REVIEW

YOUR HEART
IS HIS CRIB,
HIS THRONE,
HIS PALACE.

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View. . .

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. — Is. 6:3
God is Love. — 1 Jn. 4:8

It is daring if not presumptuous for mortal man to say what God is like. Man would not only be lost for words but lost in every way if God had not disclosed himself. In that disclosure, which we call the Bible, we learn what God is like. To a degree, that is, for it is a matter of paper and ink revealing the mind of God, and this obviously has its limitations. How can the infinite God ever reveal himself to finite man? It is both a magnificent impossibility and a gloriously accomplished fact.

We are especially blessed that God has revealed himself in a book, or in words that were eventually written down and became a book, *the* Book which we call Scripture. Had it been any other way it would have been confusing and uncertain. A book can not only be read again and again, but it can be studied, *searchingly* studied. What a marvel, come to think of it, that one can learn about God by opening a book!

It becomes a matter of faith that there is more to the Book than paper and ink. God himself is teaching us in those pages through his Spirit. It is therefore a matter of heart as well as mind. When man turns to the Bible with an open mind and a prayerful heart something very important is happening. But this may be rare, even in an age when thousands of millions of Bibles (The Bible societies alone distributed 501 million copies in 1979!) are published each year.

Various summaries of what God is like have been drawn, which theologians call attributes. The lists of God's attributes seem overwhelming, if not irrelevant and boring. A lecturer runs the risk of putting his audience to sleep if he belabors the attributes of God. Alexander Campbell in his *Christian System* does as well as anyone in systematizing them. We include them here so as to present a larger picture of what God is like.

Creator (Creation) reveals:
Wisdom
Power
Goodness

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Lawgiver (Providence) reveals:
Justice
Truth
Holiness
Redeemer (Redemption) reveals:
Mercy
Condescension
Love
In all these God is:
Infinite
Immutable
Eternal

Everything that the Bible says about God or even implies could presumedly be placed under one of these headings. But no list seems adequate. This one omits the *wrath* of God, though Campbell would probably include this with *justice.* But the wrath of God is so vital in understanding what God is like that it should be emphasized.

So much for lists of attributes. One learns more of what God is like by observing what he says and does, especially as these are set forth in the great dramas of scripture, such as the call of Isaiah, which is recorded in Isaiah 6. The prophet-to-be sees the Lord, "high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." He hears an angel cry out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

God's holiness is the very essence of his being, and this attribute, once realized, causes man to see his own sinfulness as nothing else will. "I am God and not man," Hosea (11:9) hears God say, "the Holy One in your midst." What drama that is, the Holy One among the unholy! The prophet could thus see man's sinfulness in bold relief: "There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and commiting adultery." The prophet is talking about our world as well, and if we do not see sin in that dimension it is because we do not see the holiness of God. We can ask as has Dr. Menninger in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?*

So it was with Isaiah. There is a *Woe, Lo,* and *Go* to his call, and each little word speaks volumes on what God is like. When he saw the Holy One, he moaned "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Man sees what God is like and cries *Woe is me!* But God's holiness also causes him to see the fallenness of all mankind: *I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.* Isaiah was made a prophet only when he could woefully cry *I am lost!* It wasn't a scorching sermon that did it, but it was seeing the holiness of God.

The *Woe* was followed by *Lo*, which marked the prophet's cleansing of his sin: "Lo, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." He was now ready for the *Go*, so when the Lord asked who would go for him, he responded "Here I am! Send me." *Go*, the Lord said to him, *and say to this people . . .*"

Here is good news. The Holy One calls sinful man. He forgives sinful man. He reveals himself to sinful man. He uses sinful man to reach out in mercy to other sinful men. If the struggle before the Holy One begins with *Woe*, it is sealed by *Lo*, and it continues in *Go*.

God's holiness has many properties or expressions. There is the glory of God so often referred to in Scripture, which is what men have sometimes seen rather than God himself. Moses asked to see God's own face, but he was allowed to see God's back only "while my glory passes by" (Ex. 33:22). The glory of God is thus the presence (in a special way) of God.

Then there is the eternity of God, which is the persistence of his holiness. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God," Psa. 90 declares, while Paul refers to "the God of steadfastness and encouragement" in Rom. 15:5. God keeps on keeping on because he is God and not man, the Holy One. We also see God's holiness in his power, for all his mighty acts in history are expressions of his holiness, "glorious in power," as Ex. 15:6 has Moses singing.

"The Holy One shows himself holy in righteousness" Isa. 5:16 assures us, which is still another property of God's holiness. His immutability is still another expression of his holiness. When one prophet (Mal. 3:6) describes God as one that does not change, he explains why God remains longsuffering in the face of man's continual rebellion. If God were like man, it would have ended long ago!

There is the wrath of God, an essential attribute of his holiness. It is noteworthy that in the very place God's love is so dramatically set forth there is the warning "he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him" (Jn. 3:36). God's holiness makes sin abhorent and intolerable. It is as if God turns away his face in disgust. This is what Isaiah saw in his own soul, the stench of sin. Only God's mercy allows a place for sinful man, *for a time*. Eventually all sin must be expelled from the presence of God, for he is the Holy One. The modern church, especially its more liberal persuasion, seems embarrassed by the doctrine of God's wrath. But to Paul the gospel has no meaning except in reference to God's wrath: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth" (Rom. 1:18). Since God is the Holy One his wrath necessarily looms over our sinful world, just as holiness and sin are

logically antipodals. Man's only hope lies in the mercy of the holy God. And this is the point of the gospel.

The apostolic principle, *God is love*, also points up the unique character of God. He does indeed love, verbal action, but the essence of God reaches beyond that, for God *is* love, just as he is holy. Once we see both the holiness of God and the love of God we see what God is like.

After writing the greatest sentence of any language, *God is love* (1 Jn. 4:8), the apostle goes on to tell how this love was demonstrated: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him." We've heard about *manifest destiny*, but how about *manifest love?* In manifesting love the Holy One manifested himself. What a revelation, the Christ in the very image of God serving as manifest love! When John says God sent his Son into "the world," he is not referring to towns, cities, and nations, but to the organized system of evil that stands in definance of his holiness.

The Holy One, the one who is love itself, sent his Son to the world *to be murdered.* Somehow the wrath of God demanded it, for sin had to be atoned for, "so that we might live," as John puts it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son," the golden text of the Bible assures us, and this tells us all we need to know about why God is love. He *so* loved that he *gave*, and he gave ultimately and transcendently. He *is* love and he gave himself. It is a mystery too vast for our understanding. We only need to believe it.

This is the way John puts it when he again pens that majestic line *God is love.* "So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him," he says in 1 Jn. 4:16. We "know" God's love in the sense of being fully assured, not in the sense of comprehending. Had you thought in terms of *believing* the love of God, as the apostle does here? This is the heart of faith, believing God's love. It is the antidote to legalism.

Like holiness, love has its properties, such as grace and mercy. What is mercy but God's love and what is grace but manifest love? Let us no longer define grace as unmerited favor, for it is much more than this. It is God giving himself in Jesus Christ.

But even before Christ the Holy One favored his people with grace and mercy, and one more myth that we must overcome is the idea that the God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath while the God of the New Testament is a God of grace and mercy. The truth is that *both* God's grace and wrath are evident in *both* Testaments. Whether under the Old or the New, no one has ever been saved except by God's grace. No one under any dispensation has ever been saved by law! One of the great texts on what God is like is in Ex. 34:6, where he is depicted as "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. This

repeated again and again in the Old Testament, such as in Ps. 103:8: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

Our world view therefore is to be centered in the creator God, whose essence is holiness and love. — *the Editor*

Foundations of Premillennialism. . .Part 2

REVELATION 20 AND THE REIGN OF CHRIST OVER THE NATIONS

Robert Shank

Amillennialists assert that neither premillennialism nor postmillennialism would exist were it not for the presence of Rev. 20:1-10 in the Bible. The passage, they say, is the "foundation passage" for the whole concept of a millennium, and apart from Rev. 20:1-10 the doctrine of the millennium could not be established from the Bible. With respect to the "thousand years" aspect, they are correct. But the fact of the Messianic Age and kingdom as an interim between the Second Advent and the Eternal Age would still remain an essential facet of Bible prophecy, for it is well established elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Some have asserted that Rev. 20:1-10 lends no real support to premillennialism because "nothing is said in the passage about Christ coming to earth to reign over the nations." (The argument is the same sort of dodge to which many resort in their opposition to the place of baptism in conversion: "There is nothing in John 3:16 about baptism. . .where is anything about baptism in Acts 16:30, 31?" etc.) We are not at liberty to isolate Rev. 20:1-10 from its context — both the context of the total eschatological disclosure of the Bible, and also its immediate context in the Revelation. Rev. 19:11-21, which is an integral part of the complete episode (Rev. 19:11 — 20:15) posits the coming of Christ to earth in power and righteous judgment to "smite the nations" and to "rule them with a rod of iron" (v. 15). In the prophetic episode, the reign of Christ over the nations (the central thesis of 20:1-6) follows his advent. If Rev. 20:1-6 were to be excised from the Bible, the integrity of the episode would be destroyed, for 19:15 posits that after "smiting the nations" in righteous judgment, Christ will "rule them with a rod of iron," and without 20:1-6 there remains no place in the episode for such a reign to occur. Thus 20:1-6 is essential to the continuity and integrity of the episode, and its position in the episode posits premillennialism.

For opponents of premillennialism, Rev. 19:11-21 is a "difficult" passage and poses a crucial problem: if the passage depicts the Second Advent, it predicates a realistic interpretation of Rev. 20:1-6 and establishes premillennialism. In order to defend their figurative interpretation of Rev. 20:1-6, antimillenarians must assume that the Second Advent of Christ is not in view in Rev. 19:11-21.

Some say that the coming of Christ in view in Rev. 19:11-21 is not his Second Advent at the end of the age, but rather a "spiritual" coming in judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or at the Fall of Rome in 410 (or whatever, whenever), and that his "rule over the nations" is a "spiritual" reign through the influence of the churches over the nations in the present age.

(If the present era is the rule of Christ over the nations, as the allegorizers contend, it is indeed a strange reign which bears no resemblance to the descriptions in the OT prophecies of the Messianic kingdom on earth. If the present age is the Messianic kingdom foretold by the prophets, the nations have been a bit slow to get the message about swords and plowshares, spears and pruninghooks, and the decision to "learn war no more" is long overdue. If the present era is the Messianic kingdom of OT prophecy, as amillennialists assert, the kingdom has not been overly successful.)

Loraine Boettner writes that Rev. 19:11-21 "sets forth in figurative language the age-long struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil in the world, with its promise of complete victory."[1] He Quotes Warfield:

> The thing symbolized is obviously the complete victory of the Son of God over all the hosts of wickedness . . . . The sword by which the victory is won proceeds out of the mouth of the conqueror (verses 15 and 21). . . . The conquest is wrought by the spoken word — in short, by the preaching of the Gospel. In fine, we have before us here a picture of the victorious career of the Gospel of Christ in the world . . . . The Gospel of Christ is. . .completely to conquer the world.[2]

Warfield paints a pleasing picture. Revelation 19:11-21 does not stand alone, however, and the assumptions of Boettner and Warfield are forbidden by the cognate passage 2 Thess. 2:1-8. There Paul writes of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him" (v. 1) when he comes in power "in the day of the Lord" (v. 2). Christ will destroy the Antichrist (the "man of sin," the "lawless one") "by his appearing and his coming," slaying him "with the breath of his mouth" (v. 8) — the spoken command, which in Rev. 19:15 is "the sharp sword issuing out of his mouth" with which Christ will "smite the nations" and dispatch the beast and the false prophet and the remnant of the armies of the beast (vs. 20, 21, cf. Isa. 11:4).

Paul pictures Christ's conquest, not as an "age-long struggle between good and evil" with victory won at last through the long process of "the preaching of the gospel" (As Boettner and Warfield on Rev. 19), but as a spectacular *event* when "by his appearing and his coming" Christ will destroy the Antichrist and the hosts of wickedness by his spoken command. Rev. 19:11-21 and 2 Thess. 2:1-8 are obviously cognate, and the significance of 2 Thess. 2:1-8 forbids the figurative interpretation of Rev. 19:11-21 by which opponents of premillennialism propose to nullify its significance as the context of Rev. 20:1-6.

In his book *Christ's Second Coming: Will It Be Premillennial?*, long a second "bible" for opponents of premillennialism, David Brown recognizes the critical importance of 2 Thess. 2:1-8, which obviously governs the interpretation of Rev. 19:11-21, which in turn governs the interpretation of Rev. 20:1-6 and determines whether the passage affirms premillennialism. He devotes nine pages to an attempt to establish that the coming of Christ in 2 Thess. 2:8 is figurative. The issue turns on whether the coming of Christ in v. 8 is the coming of Christ indicated in v. 1, "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him," which obviously is the Second Advent, as Brown acknowledges. If the "comings" in the two verses are the same, then the coming of Christ in v. 8 is the Second Advent, and the coming of Christ in the cognate passage Rev. 19:11-21 must also be the Second Advent, which confirms the truth of premillennialism, as Brown well understands. It is a crucial juncture, for the validity of his whole anti-premillenarian eschatology hangs on the question. Brown hesitates, but concludes that

> I can see nothing requiring us to take this incidental "brightness of his coming" [v. 8] to be the same with that personal "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him" [v. 1]. . . . I do not say it *cannot* be. All I say is, I see nothing which imperatively *requires* us so to understand it.[3]

Brown recognizes that his position is extremely questionable. Actually, it is not only questionable, it is preposterous. To accept Brown's thesis is to assume that Paul inserted in his letter to the Thessalonians a deliberate subtlety that could not be recognized and understood by his readers without special comment, first to call it to their attention, and then to explain it. Such an assumption is absurd. Paul wrote to enlighten, not to mislead. He was not given to inserting deliberate covert subtleties in his letters of instruction and encouragement to the churches. Without special explanation, the natural understanding of every reader of 2 Thess. 2 is that the coming of Christ in v. 8 is the coming of Christ in view in v. 1. This Brown fully concedes. But he devotes nine pages to an extremely ingenious attempt to prove that the natural understanding and obvious meaning of the passage is incorrect. But who explained all this to the Thessalonians? I cannot accept Brown's preposterous assumption that, writing to the

Thessalonians about so solemn a matter as the coming again of Jesus Christ, Paul inserted in his letter a great hidden subtlety — a covert shift of reference that cannot be detected or understood without extensive supplementary comment, explanation, and interpretation.

The natural, obvious understanding of 2 Thess. 2:1-8 is the only acceptable understanding, and the coming of Christ in v. 8 is the coming of Christ in v. 1. Furthermore, the coming of Christ in view in 2 Thess. 2:1 and 8 is in view also in 1:7-10, and the obvious parallel between 1:7-10 and Rev. 19:11-21 will not be lost to any except those who choose not to see. In 2 Thess. 1:7-10 and 2:1-8 the coming of Christ is a spectacular cataclysmic event at the end of the age. The same great end-of-the-age event — the Second Advent — is in view in the cognate passage Rev. 19:11-21. The significance of Rev. 19:11-21 as context of Rev. 20:1-6 posits a realistic rather than an allegorical-mystical understanding of 20:1-6, and thus confirms the truth of premillennialism.

From the foregoing considerations it is obvious that the reign of Christ over the nations which the faithful of the churches will share with him is not from heaven in this present age, but will be on earth following his triumphant return in glory, power, and righteous judgment, when "the world to come" will be "put in subjection" to him (Heb. 2:5-8). The reign of Christ and the saints in view in Rev. 20:4-6 is precisely the reign in view in the promise of Jesus in Rev. 2:25-29:

> That which you have [the gospel and true faith] hold fast until I come. He that overcomes and keeps my works to the end, to him will I give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces, even as I have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star.[4] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Let us compare the two passages, Rev. 19:11-20:6 and Rev. 2:25-29:

In Rev. 19:11—20:6 Christ comes to earth in righteous judgment, and then rules over the nations. Please read the passage and observe three things:

1. Christ comes to earth to "smite the nations" in judgment and to "rule them with a rod of iron" (19:15).

2. Christ's reign over the nations follows his coming (as context indicates).

3. Those who take part in "the first resurrection" will share Christ's reign over the nations (20:4-6).

In Rev. 2:25-29 Christ speaks "to the churches" concerning his coming to judge and to rule over the nations. Please read the passage and observe three things (precisely the three things observed in Rev. 19:11-20:6):

1. Christ will come to judge ("break in pieces") the nations and to "rule them with a rod of iron" as the Father has promised him (v. 27, cf. Ps. 2:7-9, Ps. 110:5,6).

2. Christ's reign over the nations will follow his coming (v. 25).

3. Those who "overcome and keep my works to the end" in their pilgrimage of faith will share Christ's reign over the nations (vs. 26,27, cf. 2 Tim. 2:11, 12, Rev. 5:9,10).

From the above passages four things are evident: (1) the reign of Christ and the faithful of his churches is future, beyond our present life pilgrimage of faith; (2) the reign will follow the coming of Christ and the end of the age; (3) the reign will follow "the first resurrection"; and (4) the reign will be over the nations on earth.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

The realistic understanding of Rev. 20:4-6 predicated by the foregoing considerations forbids the fanciful interpretations of "the first resurrection" resorted to by antimillenarians in their opposition to the premillenarian faith of the apostolic and early-centuries churches of Christ. Nevertheless, let us consider briefly the question of the meaning of "the first resurrection" in view in Rev. 20:4-6.

Among the most popular interpretations of "the first resurrection" advocated by antimillenarians is the assertion that it is spiritual resurrection in the experience of conversion. Conversion indeed is a spiritual resurrection (Jn. 5:24, 25, Eph. 2:1-6, Col. 2:12, 13; 3:1, Rom. 6:3,4, 1 Jn. 3:14), and when we are baptized into Christ we "pass from death to life." But the very real spiritual resurrection of conversion is not "the first resurrection" in view in Rev. 20:4-6.

According to the passage, "the first resurrection" is in order to "reign with Christ for a thousand years." But the issue of who is to reign with Christ over the nations is not determined by conversion alone, but by faithfulness to Christ "until the end. . .until I come" (Rev. 2:25-29). Christ's exhortation to qualify for sharing his reign over the nations is addressed "to the churches" (2:29), the company of those who already have experienced conversion. Since the invitation to share his reign is addressed by Christ to those who already have experienced conversion, and since Christ exhorts them to continue to hold fast the faith they already *have* and to overcome "until the end. . .until I come" in order to share his reign over the nations, it is obvious that "the first resurrection" (which is in order to reign with Christ) cannot be conversion, as some have assumed. Furthermore, with reference to the resurrection in view in Rev. 20:4-6, special mention is made of martyrs, who obviously had come to faith and conversion prior to both their martyrdom and the subsequent resurrection. Thus the "first resurrection" which the martyrs (and all the faithful dead) are to experience is physical resurrection. That the death from which the martyrs are to be raised is physical rather than spiritual is also established by Rev. 6:9-11, where the death is defined as physical. The resurrection which corresponds to physical death obviously is physical.

In their contention that "the first resurrection" is spiritual and the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" is physical, some have appealed to Jn. 5:25-29 where Jesus distinguishes between spiritual resurrection (v. 25) and physical resurrection (vs. 28, 29). But the passage does not afford a valid analogy of Rev. 20:4-6. Context in the passage in John 5 clearly defines the character of the resurrection in "the hour that now is" as spiritual, and the resurrection in "the hour that is coming" as physical. In Rev. 20:4-6 there is no such contextual definition to establish such a distinction. The only differentiation is between the *time* of "the first resurrection," that of the "blessed and holy," and the *time* of the subsequent resurrection of "the rest of the dead," who "did not come to life until the thousand years were ended."

Rev. 20:4-6 does not differentiate between two *kinds* of resurrection, one spiritual and the other physical, but between two *occasions* of physical resurrection, the first of "the blessed and holy" at the outset of "the thousand years," and the second of "the rest of the dead" after "the thousand years were ended." The same verb form (*ezesan*, ingressive aorist, *came to life*) is used in reference to both groups, and to assume a distinction between the two references without any contextual definition to indicate it is totally arbitrary and absurd.

The spiritual resurrection in this present life which men may experience through faith and obedience to Christ and his gospel is not "the first resurrection" of Rev. 20, but is instead the necessary *prerequisite* for participation in the First Resurrection, which will be the physical resurrection of "the blessed and holy" who, in "the first resurrection," will "come to life and reign with Christ a thousand years."

Other fanciful interpretations of "the first resurrection" have been offered: the translation of the souls of the faithful to heaven at the time of their death; the steadfast devotion of successors of the early matyrs, who likewise faithfully endured persecution; the revival of the gospel cause for which early martyrs died, which at the time of their death seemed doomed under the relentless persecution of the pagan Romans; the "triumph" of the church in the Edicts of Constantine; the survival of the church after the collapse of the Roman Empire; the Reformation; etc., etc. In the various conjectures offered by antimillenarians, the First Resurrection bears no relation at all to the statement that "the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended." All allegorical-mystical interpretations of "the first resurrection" are forbidden by the realistic understanding of Rev. 20:4-6 predicated by the significance of Rev. 19:11-21 as context and the significance of 2 Thess. 2:1-8 and 1:7-10 as cognates governing the interpretation of Rev. 19:11-21, as we have earlier observed.

Some have objected that Rev. 20:4-6 cannot posit physical resurrection because John saw only "the souls" of the martyrs who "came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." But *psuche* is used elsewhere in the NT of the total person (Acts 7:14; 27:37, 1 Pet. 3:20) and the Hebrew equivalent *nephesh* is so used many times in the OT. The use of "soul" for the total person is well established biblical usage. Furthermore, souls who already share eternal life with Christ can "come to life" only in the sense of physical resurrection of the body.

Some have objected that the Bible teaches a general resurrection and judgment, and that this forbids the possibility of a special resurrection at some other time. The Bible does indeed disclose a great general resurrection and judgment, and this is precisely what is in view in Rev. 20:11-15. But a general resurrection of all the dead that are in the grave on a given day is not necessarily a universal resurrection of all who ever have lived, and in no way does it preclude the possibility of a prior resurrection of others at some other time. The Bible discloses both a general resurrection of all the (remaining) dead — "the rest of the dead" — and a special resurrection of a privileged class a thousand years prior to the general resurrection.

Against the doctrine of a special resurrection for the faithful, some have cited Jn. 5:28, 29, "the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." If nothing more were said in the Scriptures concerning the time of resurrection, we should conclude from this passage that there will be only a universal resurrection at one specific hour. But other passages forbid such a conclusion, and the language of the text does not require it. Just before his statement concerning the resurrection, Jesus declared that "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (v. 25). Meyer says of vs. 28, 29 that

> Here it is as little said that all shall be raised *at the same time* as in ver. 25 that all the spiritually dead shall be quickened simultaneously. The *tagmata* [ranks, orders, classes] which Paul distinguished in the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, and which are in harmony with the teaching of Judaism and of Chirst Himself regarding a twofold resurrection. . .find room likewise in the *hora* [hour] which is capable of prophetic extension.[5]

The assumption of "prophetic extension" in the "hour" of the resurrection of all mankind is, of course, the assumption of an interval of time between "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of judgment." The assumption is not without warrant, for the presence of undisclosed intervals in simple statement is a well established facet of biblical rhetoric. The Bible declares that "in the day that God created man. . . .male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:1,2). There is no

suggestion of an interval of time between creation of Adam and creation of Eve; it appears from the statement that both were created the same day. From the complete biblical disclosure, however, it is evident that an interval of time occurred between creation of Adam and of Eve (Gen. 2:18-23). In like manner, in Jn. 5:28, 29 there is no suggestion of an interval between "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of judgment," but from the complete biblical disclosure, it is evident that an interval will occur between the two resurrections.

Antimillenarians sometimes quote passages which speak of "*a* resurrection" or "*the* resurrection" and then point out that the passages do not speak of "resurrections." Such argument reflects a superficial approach to the eschatological disclosure of the NT and failure to observe the difference between "resurrection *of* the dead" and "resurrection *from* the dead," a NT distinction of critical significance. Baines writes

> That a "resurrection *from* the dead" differs from a "resurrection *of* the dead" is, owing to our constant confusion of the phrases, little understood. Everybody would see the difference between speaking of "the departure *of* a company" and "the departure *from* a company." The first implies the departure of the whole assembly, the second of one or more persons out of the assembly. This is just the difference between a "resurrection *of* the dead" and a "resurrection *from* the dead." "The dead" is the whole company of dead persons. A "resurrection *of* the dead" simply means that dead persons are raised. But a "resurrection *from* the dead" means that one or more persons are raised from amongst the company of the dead. So the phrase is invariably used in Scripture.[6]

In the NT the "resurrection of the dead' is expressed simply as *anastasis nekron* (genitive of description). The "resurrection from among the dead" is expressed by the use of the ablative case *nekron* (same form as the genitive) with the preposition *ek* (out of , from within, from among), *anastasis ek nekron*. The ablative construction *nekron* with *anastasis, anistemi*, or some cognate verbal or substantival construction appears 52 times in the NT (48 times with *ek*, four times with *apo*). It is used once with reference to spiritual resurrection in conversion (Rom. 6:13) and twice metaphorically (Rom. 11:15, Eph. 5:14). With respect to physical resurrection, it is used 49 times: 35 times with reference to the resurrection of Jesus, three times with reference to the resurrection of Lazarus of Bethany, four times in Herod's references to the supposed resurrection of John the Baptist, twice in Dives' request of Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers, once with reference to Abraham's faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead, and four times with reference to the future privileged resurrection of the faithful.

Only the ablative construction could describe the past instances of resurrection (real in the cases of Jesus and Lazarus of Bethany, hypothetical in the cases of John, the beggar Lazarus, and Isaac), for they were not general resurrections of the dead, but instead were instances of the

resurrection of individual men from among the total company of the dead: one man rose from the dead, the rest of the dead remained in death. In like manner only the ablative construction can describe the future resurrection of a privileged class (those who take part in "the first resurrection" of Rev. 20:4-6), for it will be the resurrection of a particular group from among the total company of the dead: "the blessed and holy" will rise from the dead, and "the rest of the dead" will remain in death. *—624 King, Mt. Vernon, MO 65712.* Order *Until* directly from Robert Shank, $11.95.

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY (2)

W. Carl Ketcherside

I think all of us know what we mean by renewal. It does not mean to create, to invent, or promote something new. It assumes the previous existence of the thing to be renewed. It also predicates the departure from the state which should be maintained, and the recovery or restoration of that condition. I have a friend who owns a grandfather's clock. It is an antique of many years. When he first inherited it, it would not run. The case was marred in several spots. But he renewed it. Once again it ticks until it disrupts your reading by day and disturbs your sleep at night.

The body of Christ has begun to show its age. That is peculiar because it is both ageless and timeless. It is the very embodiment of those who have eternal life. Unfortunately, those who have pledged themselves to be true to its head, have been seduced into taking their eyes off eternal life and to look at this world with more than a coy glance. They have been enticed to use the methods of the world. They have been lured into striving for success by the motif which animates so many. As a result they have erected rival buildings in choice spots, lavishing millions of dollars upon their own comfort which might have been used in better things. Caught up in the "cathedral-complex" they have pridefully sought to outdo one another and their rival steeples rise in every wealthy suburb as an indication of their "love for Jesus."

And the lives of many who perform what they call "acts of worship" at such places are as empty and devoid of consecration as the aisles and halls of the structures when the custodian turns out the lights and locks the heavy doors with their dead-bolts. It is essential that such lives be rescued from the useless round of making pilgrimages to holy places and engaging

in vain and repetitious prayers. Singing four or five songs per week, and listening to a harangue about some theme will no longer pass for the Christian life. Our spirits have to be rekindled. Our hearts have to burn within us. We have to remove the bushel baskets from our lights. We have to long for good as a deer longs for a stream of cool water.

Now this transformation can only be wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. To be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. Where there is no Spirit there is no life. We have been betrayed by our mentors.They have convinced us that the only Spirit available for us today is the word. The more of the Bible we know the more the Spirit dwells in us. He who cannot read or write cannot have the Spirit. He who carries the Bible in his pocket has the Spirit in his jacket. It is time we put an end to this falsehood. It is just not true. It never was true. It has resulted in joyless, complaining, griping, unhappy and dissatisfied lives. It has also resulted in "double lives" as men have tried to live above themselves, and have always fallen victims of their own pretensions, landing on what the Word calls "the dunghill" of life.

We have also been flim-flammed into believing that the Spirit worked among the primitive saints, and later deserted them and left them to go it alone. So we have been condemned to go stumbling along, devoid of the Spirit and still trying to grasp and keep the peace that only the Spirit can produce and confer. There has never been a time when the family of God existed anywhere on this earth that the Spirit was absent from it. Each of us must possess the Spirit, live by the Spirit, and be guided by the Spirit, or we have had it. If we would be renewed we must begin by asking God to fill us with the Spirit. There is no other way. It is either this or spiritual death — a slow, lingering, tortuous death from which there is no hope.

It is not enough for renewal that you have the Spirit, but the Spirit must have you! There is a difference. You must recognize that you are "sold out" to God. All you have, all you are, all you ever hope to be, are His. As the divine potter He can mould you at will. You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. You began all this with God's Spirit. And you cannot complete it with the flesh. You cannot finish under your own power. You cannot wait for others. You have no right to expect of them what you are unwilling to risk yourself.

Renewal through recovery! Recovery has to do with that which has become lost. We recover a body from a stream, or a document from the files, or a diamond ring from the garbage can in which it was inadvertently dumped. One who is sick recovers his lost health. One who lost in a poor investment recovers the money which had "gone down the drain." We must admit that we have lost some values of the faith or we will never reclaim them. So long as we mislead ourselves into believing that we have it made,

that all who will be saved must come to us, we will continue our downward path to the end.

The fact is we have lost a great deal. And there is a lot we never had to start with. We are "seekers" and not squatters. We are explorers. We are pioneers. Our problem has been that what was recaptured in the past looked good to us. We thought it was all there was. So we bailed out and became settlers. We never should have done that. We are destined to be strangers and pilgrims. At the point where we settled is the place where our sectarianism began. We are only blazing the trail. We are clearing the way. We are running a race and not indulging our ease in a sedentary lifestyle. The word sedentary means "to sit." We will have time for that when we reach heaven.

I do not want to take the time to detail all that we have lost or misplaced. It might surprise you if I did. But in subsequent articles I want to deal with matters of grave importance, the things that really make a difference. But right now let me mention that one of the most important things we have lost is a sense of the nature of the community of the saved ones. From the magnificent and splendid view given of it by inspiration we have reduced it to a minute clan.

Listen to this: "After this I looked and there was an enormous crowd — no one could count the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands." Whew! Isn't that something? A multitude in which racial and ethnic overtones have all disappeared. Compare that with our puny little sects on earth composed of a few million at most. We can tell how many of each of them there are. Surely we shall need to enlarge our vision. the way the Lord counts people and the way we count them are two different things. Maybe we are looking at two different kingdoms.

All of our sects are man-made! Every one of them! That includes the one to which we belong also. God did not create a single one of them. He built no walls, erected no dams, put up no barriers to separate and segregate them. All of them began as "movements." And all of the arguments over names are human arguments. Not a one of them is divine. They were all contrived. They grew out of the pressure of debate and human striving. The keen distinctions, the sharp arguments, the clever distinctions, all originated in the minds of theologians, men who were schooled to be lawyers for the defense instead of lovers of the defenseless.

And all of these obstructions are mere fantasies. They exist only in the minds of men. Faced up to realistically they dissolve into thin air. Only those who are sectarian can be barred by them. One who is not sectarian goes through them as if they were mist. One who can see brethren on both sides of the fence is not inhibited by them. To him, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." One who is an inspector of circumcision can tell you how many are circumcised and how many are not. But one who is a new creation can tell you only how many were fashioned by God's hand. We see what we are looking for!

A GLORIOUS NEW ISSUE

It may not be a new issue in terms of the history of the church at large, but it is new within Church of Christ circles. And what an issue it is: *salvation by grace apart from works of law.* Indeed, that was *the* issue with the reformers in their confrontation with the Roman church that resulted in the Protestant Reformation. But up until now our folk have made issues of methods, whether in reference to missionary societies and instrumental music, or congregational cooperation and Sunday Schools. Weighty doctrinal issues have not mattered all that much to Churches of Christ and others of the Stone-Campbell movement. That grand old historian, W. E. Garrison, was right when he said that the Campbellites have argued about methods rather than doctrine. Well, after all, Chalcedon and Nicea are a long way from Nashville and Dallas!

But these days there is something new, and I will risk calling it *good* news. Believe it or not, some of our brethren are now challenging each other to debate the issue of salvation by grace. If this is hard to believe, it may be even more incredible that this elegant altercation is taking place within our "right wing," if I may be allowed to do a little categorizing. Actually it is the *far* right wing, those brethren who call themselves "conservative" and are called "antis" or more commonly the "anti-Hearld of Truth" persuasion, who make up five or six percent of Churches of Christ, and who are now completely separated, insofar as fellowship is concerned, from the others.

This means that the debate is largely among themselves, for as Churches of Christ are generally withdrawn from all other denominations so are the sub-groups within Churches of Christ withdrawn from each other. It is a case of one's world shrinking more and more as per the demands of legalism. It is not surprising that our people might rediscover the dynamic of God's grace and the true meaning of the gospel through one of our right wing sub-groups. Just as the most powerful voice for moral and political freedom today is not a Britisher or an American but a

Russian. It was in very narrow confines that Alexander Solzhenitsyn discovered what it means to be free, so that he could eventually write, *Thank you, prison!*

That seems to be happening to many of our people these days: they are discovering freedom within the prison of legalism, a prison that encircles the entire Church of Christ world. It is consistent with history that this should find special expression within one of our most obscurant segments. Where was Luther when he found the grace of God except on his knees doing penance on a cold floor. It will not be too great a price to pay, as did Solzhenitsyn, to say *Thank you, legalism* if we learn the mercy and grace of God.

Perhaps I should add that I am indirectly a part of this set-to, for in the books that have been published, the articles written, and the debates conducted my name is listed among the "Neo-Calvinists," along with that of Carl Ketcherside, on whom of course it is always open season. But it is really the "antis," the wayward "antis," those who are misbehaving, that they are after, for they are fellow party members while we are not. Brethren have difficulty in putting Carl and me in the right pigeon hole. That leading "antis" would list us along with their errant comrades, who probably would not have us in their churches, only shows that we should leave pigeon-holing to the pigeons. But I take it that they are more interested in discrediting their own than in crediting us.

The latest chapter in this dispute is that the "grace-unity heretics" (an unlikely label for a people who began as a unity movement!) are fighting back, taking their stand for grace and challenging their persecutors to put up or lay off. Not unlike Martin Luther in his crucible for the grace of God, these "Neo-Calvinists" (a surprising label indeed!) have issued propositions for debate. They have nailed their theses to the cathedral door! Since this is a new dimension in Church of Christ controversy some of the propositions may interest you. They are far different than those dealing with cups, classes, organs, societies, lesson leaves, etc. Two of them are especially revealing.

"The scriptures teach that God justifies sinners by grace through faith in Christ, *apart from works of the law.*"

"The scriptures teach when the ungodly believes in Christ as Savior and is baptized in His name for the forgiveness of sins, God imputes, reckons, puts to his account a righteousness of God or the righteousness of Christ."

We can thank the "antis" for pinpointing the essence of Church of Christism. In two propositions, along with a third that follows, they are at the taproot of what ails us as a people. We are saved because we have been baptized and faithfully comply with "the five acts of worship." We are righteous because of what we have done — faithful church attendance,

even on Wednesday night. We *are,* like the Roman church, a salvation by works church, and the propositions are admitting what we really believe and practice. We are righteous because we are right! No wonder our people are insecure in trying to be righteous by their own righteousness, scared to live and afraid to die!

The other proposition that prosecutes us is: "The scriptures teach that fellowship in Christ allows for diversity and disagreement among Christians." This should not be confined to the "antis," for the Churches of Christ were born and bred on the premise that we have to see everything alike. We have even disfellowshipped our own Christian Church brethren over instrumental music.

Thank God for our heretics that are standing up for what is obviously the gospel of Christ, *salvation by faith apart from works,* and that we are righteous, not because of what we have done but because of what Christ has done. And for recognizing what is clearly scriptural, that we are to receive one another even as Christ has received us, warts and all. — *the Editor*

BOOK NOTES

We now have bound volumes of this journal for the past six years: *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) and *The Ancient Order* (1978) are 5.50 each. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* and *With All the Mind* (double volume, 1979-80) is 8.50. And now we have *Jesus Today* (double volume, 1981-82) ready to send out at 8.50. These prices are actually less than the regular 5.00 per year subscription, which makes the handsome hardbound binding free. Those who have ordered the latest volume will soon be receiving their copy with invoice enclosed.

The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, which has been in and out of print during the past century, continues to be in demand. It is the most important book on Campbell and his associates that has ever been written; two volumes in one at only 21.95 postpaid.

Speaking of Campbell, a writer today who writes much like the old reformer is Howard Snyder, one that writes like a restorationist if anyone ever has. He has three books that we highly recommend: *The Problem of Wine Skins* (5.50), *The Community of the King* (5.50) and *Liberating the Church* (7.50). Prices include postage. Snyder deserves a place alongside Barclay, Stott, and Trueblood, but he is more of a reformer than they.

If you want to confront a Mormon with embarrassing material, you should have on hand *The Mormon Papers,* which examines the Mormon scriptures in the light of both the Bible and archaeology. 4.50 pp. And if it is the Jehovah's Witnesses that concern you, we recommend A.A. Hoekema's book by that name, which examines both their history and their doctrines. 2.50 pp.

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